

BIRD LIFE HUMAN ESSENTIAL

NECESSARY TO MAN'S EXISTENCE
—WORK FOR HIM DAILY
FROM DAWN TO DUSK.

PRESERVE THE FOOD SUPPLY

Activity of the Robin, Wren, Kingbird
and Nighthawk—Sparrow Is Con-
demned by Expert Clark in
Treatise on the Subject.

BY EDWARD B. CLARK.

(Associate Member American Ornithol-
ogists' Union.)

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Science has shown that bird life must be counted as one of the elements of the wealth of nations. Science has shown further that the annihilation of bird life means the annihilation of human life. This latter confident assertion failed of its effect when it was given to the world, for no other reason than that of its startling nature. The people put it down for a bit of scientific balderdash.

It is a curious fact that the great

matter of fact, however, the bill of fare does not tell half the tale. The sparrow, not content with being almost wholly a grain eater, does its best to kill off the tribes of birds that, ignoring grain, seek as food the pests which prey upon the vegetation.

A pair of house wrens started to build a nest in a box which had been nailed on the top of a post in the rear of a city residence. The person who put up the home for Jenny and her husband made the mistake of cutting too large a hole for an entrance. After the nest was completed and the eggs were laid two English sparrows came along during the temporary absence of the wrens, broke all the eggs and threw a large part of the nest out of the box. The wrens are fighters and would have thrashed the sparrows if they had caught them at their tricks. They viewed the destruction of their home with dismay and anger, but soon started in to build again. A cleat was nailed over a part of the entrance hole by the owner of the yard, making it so small that the sparrows could not enter, while the wrens had no difficulty in slipping in. They now have a second nest full of eggs.

lives almost wholly on winged insects of the injurious kind. It also has an appetite for bees, and it was this marked taste that made trouble for the bird. Its numbers began to diminish under persecution, and then some of the members of Uncle Sam's biological survey who had a suspicion that the kingbird was being treated badly, began an investigation. It was necessary to be cruel to some hundreds of individuals in order to be kind to the entire family. Kingbirds were killed and their stomachs were examined. It was found that nearly everything they ate was something which, living, was inimical to the farmer's interest. Bees were found in some numbers in the stomach, but strangely enough the kingbirds had distinguished between bees and bees, so to speak, and had left the workers alone to dine off the worthless drones.

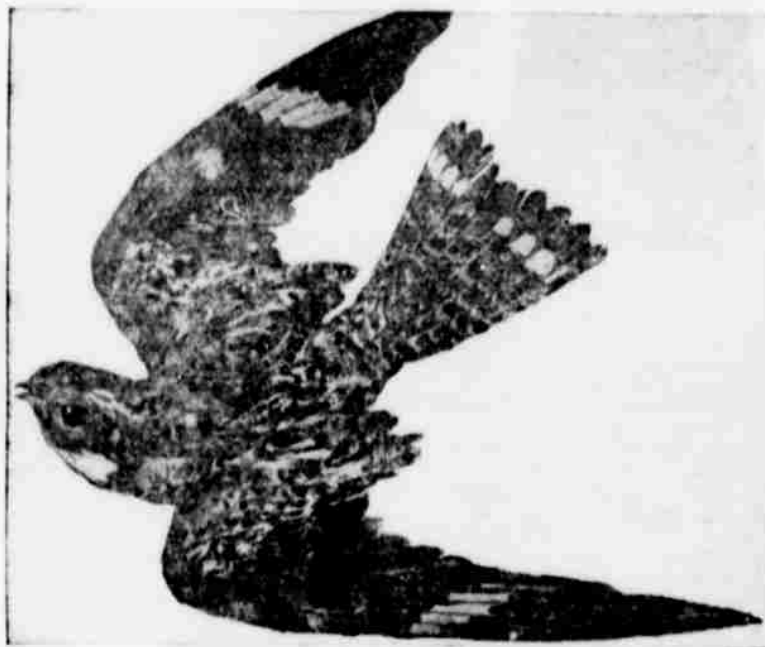
When this statement of the authorities was published in bulletin form by the government the bee-keepers thought the matter was a huge joke and laughed at the investigations of the scientists. The bee men were induced to do a little investigating themselves, and after a few months' close observation they were willing to let Tyrannus stay unmolested on his perch above the hives.

There is a bird of the sky which the government of the United States regards so favorably that there recently has been issued and sent broadcast through the land a special plea for its protection. This bird in the northern states, for practically the whole breadth of the continent, is known as the nighthawk (chordeiles virginianus), while in the south it is called the bull bat. The nighthawks are residents both of the city and country. They may be heard after sundown emitting a peculiar squeaking note far up above the office buildings of the great busy towns. It is only within comparatively recent years that the nighthawks have shown a liking for city life. They have found in gravel-covered roofs a fair substitute for the stony country field in which in former years they made their nests. Their eggs are now found frequently upon the roofs of office buildings in all the large cities of the country.

The nighthawk zigzags its way across the sky in a flight that it makes the head swim to watch. It has long wings and is thickly feathered, a circumstance which gives it an appearance of size that is not real.

In reporting on this bird the government expert said: "This enormous stomach must be kept filled to supply motive power for the long wings, which are kept in motion so many hours. The food consists of insects taken on the wing and the bird fills its great stomach almost to breaking. The wholesale killing of the nighthawk entails an almost incalculable injury upon agricultural interests."

The instances which have been given are sufficient to show the necessity for the preservation of certain forms of the bird life of the United States. The examples of the birds' usefulness to man might be extended until they comprise nearly every family of birds on the continent. There are of course, some injurious species, but these all taken together would number, as someone has put it, but few more birds than were found in Lord Dunsyre's famous flock.



The Nighthawk.

mass of the people finally were moved to consider "the fowls of the air" by pure sentiment rather than by any fear that the disappearance of the birds would be followed by the depopulation of the globe. The feeding of humanity has done much to check the thoughtless slaughter of the song and insectivorous birds.

Their close companionship may be won by him who will seek it in sympathy and in kindness.

Possibly the use of story and illustration will make an impression upon the mind. With the exception of a few herons and cormorants, the food of the common robin consists entirely of insects. The robin at certain seasons of the year eats about double its weight in insects every day. At first glance, the robin being comparatively small, it may not seem that this gustatory performance is anything remarkable, but stop a moment to make a comparison. A man, in order to satisfy an equally well-developed appetite, would have to eat about 300 pounds of food all told at his three daily meals. To have the capacity to eat for this amount of provender he would need be 30 feet high, ten feet broad from front to back and five feet broad across the shoulders. If he were to remain as thin as he is to-day his stature would have to be increased until he towered above the Washington monument in order to give him room within his body to put the food which it would be necessary to eat to sustain life.

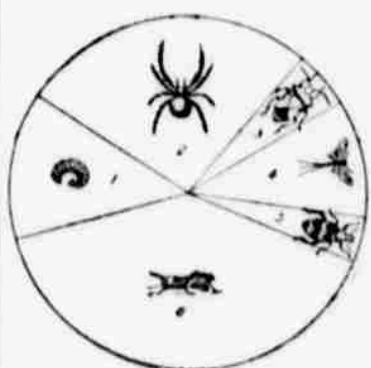
It must be borne in mind that the robin and its brother birds breakfast, dine and sup largely upon noxious insects.

Look at the accompanying cut to see what the midwife of a house wren (Troglodytes aedon) does for man in the way of checking the plague of creeping and flying things. You will search the record of the house wren in vain to find any evidences of fruit stealing. He dearly loves grasshoppers, cutworms, weevils and the unpleasantly named stink bugs. The wren loves spiders, too, and, while spiders have a use, they are not over-pleasant companions, and there be few men or women who will blame Jenny Wren for depopulating the webs.

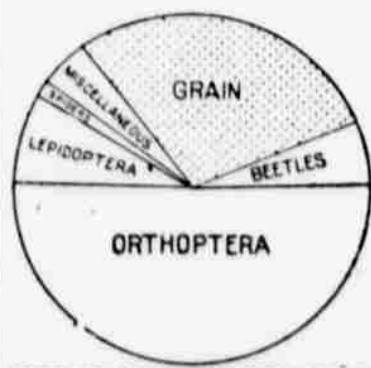
There is another bill of fare on the printed page. It is that of the English sparrow. In a chapter on necessity of the preservation of the birds it may seem strange to read the recommendation that one widespread species of birds be condemned to death and executed as rapidly as menage may be found. A glance at the daily food list of the English sparrow (passer domesticus) gives sufficient reason for his death sentence. As a



Kingbird.



Food of the House Wren



NESTLING LESS THAN ONE WEEK OLD

The Sparrow's Diet.

This instance is given simply to show the nature of the sparrow and to point out what it is doing to our native insectivorous birds all over the United States.

This kingbird, called in some parts of the country the tyrant flycatcher,

There is another side to this bird preservation matter. It is, if you will, the sentimental side. The bird adds both color and music to our lives. In the birdless day that summer will be drear indeed when song is hushed and silence reigns.

STUDENTS LOST IN MICHIGAN FOREST

TWO PRINCETON MEN HAVE
TERRIBLE EXPERIENCE IN
DENSE SWAMPS.

FIGHT BEAR WITH BARE HANDS

Attacked by Animal, They Finally
Choke Him to Death—Defective
Compass Leads Boys from
Their Path.

Marquette, Mich.—Half insane, blood smeared, eyes staring, reeking of dank swamp odors, with their clothes in rags, their faces mutilated beyond recognition, and on the point of complete exhaustion, Carel Pepla and Albert Nyquist, Princeton university students, were brought to this place the other day after having passed four days and three nights at the mercy of the primeval life in the swamps of the Swanzy district.

Neither their appearance nor mad utterings were human. Nyquist's father, who was a member of the searching party, did not recognize the physical wreck into which his son had fallen in the starving, cold, darkness in the gloomy, oozy wilderness.

A prey for wild animals by day and night, traveling in a circle in their fearful, wearisome tramp to reach civilization, the men excited the pity of the entire city when the slowly moving caravan of returning searchers brought them back to their families.

Both are Princeton men. They left recently for a tramp in the woods and, not expecting to remain away from their homes for more than a day or two, failed to provide themselves with supplies for a lengthy trip.

On the first day out they were lost. A poor compass directed them from their course and, before they were aware of the danger into which they had fallen, they were miles from a settlement and in the depth of the forest. The ground in the Swanzy district is swampy and covered with the rotting vegetable growths of thousands of years. Decaying trunks of trees heaped in grotesque array make progress slow and dense growths of vines and underbrush renders the dis-



They Fought Desperately with the Maddened Brute.

trict a veritable inferno in the summer.

Without matches to make fires or to combat the swarms of stinging insects, Nyquist and Pepla were pitifully blistered and bitten by mosquitoes and small flies.

Foodless, they wandered for the entire period except for a few dead fish which they devoured as they found them.

The most horrifying of their experiences came when on the third day out, when ready to fall from exhaustion and be prey for the wolves, a huge black bear crashed through the underbrush directly in front of the men, and advanced on his hind feet.

The men sought refuge in a tree. With almost superhuman effort they reached the first branches of a poplar only to find the bear climbing directly under them. Then, with sharp sticks, they began a fight for life.

Unable to hold to the tree longer the bear slid to the ground. Singularly enough the men, too, were so wearied they could no longer cling to the tree and they descended. The bear made a renewed attack.

With the final spurt of life and hope the men grasped the bear. Then they both lost consciousness.

As the searchers came through the dense undergrowth they came upon two semblances of humanity. The tendons of their arms were tense and their jaws set. Their hands clutched in a death grip the throat of a black bear.

TIED TO HORSE'S TAIL FOR REVENGE ON GIRL

ITALIAN IS DRAGGED TO DEATH
FOR TEARING OUT FORMER
SWEETHEART'S TONGUE.

Rome.—For tearing out his former sweetheart's tongue because she had broken her promise to remain faithful while he saved enough to support her, Francesco Vergani has been dragged to death at the village of Monselice, near Padua, by a horse, to which he was tied by the bystanders.

Vergani, when a youth of 19, fell in love with Eloise Ferrari, a girl a year his junior, and the daughter of a prosperous farmer. The girl liked him, but her parents objected that he was too young and poor to wed.

Hoping to make a fortune in America, the young man took passage for



Tied to the Horse's Tail, He Was Dragged Over the Rough Roads.

New York. The two took their vow of faithfulness in the village church, repeating together as they concluded: "May I be stricken dumb if I violate the oath I have taken."

Fortune was slower in coming to him in the new world than Vergani had hoped, and it was eight years before he considered himself able to support the woman of his choice. He had found employment with an itinerant dentist, who finally made him his partner. Corresponding through a mutual friend, Vergani had heard regularly from his betrothed during the first six years of his exile. Then the letters suddenly ceased. The Italian was worried and anxious, but still confident that the girl remained true to him.

Just as he was preparing to return home, however, he learned a short time ago in Boston that she had married a well-to-do miller of her native village.

His love turned to hatred, Vergani hastened at once to Italy, bought one of the stage coaches from which itinerant dentistry is practiced there, and drove to Monselice, where he arrived during fair time, gathered a crowd and performed a number of small operations, meanwhile questioning his patients concerning his former fiancée.

It was not long before she and her husband appeared in the group about his coach. Himself unrecognizable in the long beard he wore, he beckoned to the woman, who, encouraged by her husband, agreed to a trial of a powder with which he had been polishing the teeth of the villagers.

Catching up a pair of forceps as she opened her lips, he seized and tore out a large part of her tongue.

The crowd's first instinct was to tear him to pieces, but some one shouted: "Tie him to his horse." The suggestion met with approval. One of the horses was unfastened from the coach, Vergani was bound to its tail and the animal, already frightened and rearing, was lashed to a gallop. The victim of the mob's vengeance was dragged nearly two miles before the runaway animal was stopped. Vergani was crushed almost beyond recognition. The object of his vengeance will probably not recover.

Annual Loss by Fire.

The average annual loss by fire in the last five years has been \$251,000,000, according to the latest circular issued by the National Board of Fire Underwriters. That is a sum large enough to pay the annual interest upon the public debt of the United States, England, Spain, Mexico and the Netherlands.

Promptly Applied.

Aggrieved Speaker—My remarks, sir, do not seem with you to amount to a row of pins.

Bored Hearer—To speak candidly, they don't for a row of pins are pointed.—Baltimore American.

The Prospective Elephant Hunt.

Ye mislucky pachyderms, beware, Nor linger in your lair. The only place safe for you Are now the circus or the zoo. —Washington Star.